

Message Text

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ACTION SY-05

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NASSAU 1155

FOR DIKEOS FROM WEISS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CVIS ASEC BF
SUBJ: VISA MALFEASANCE - NASSAU

REF: STATE 174422; DIKEOS TELCON ON VISA MALFEASANCE

1. THIS CABLE, BEGUN THIS MORNING, HAS BEEN SUBJECT TO CONSTANT CHANGE THROUGHOUT THE DAY. THIS IS INDICATIVE OF THE MOVING TARGET WITH WHICH WE ARE DEALING. WE ARE IN ALMOST CONSTANT RECEIPT OF BITS AND PIECES OF INFORMATION, SIGNIFICANCE OF WHICH IT IS DIFFICULT FOR US TO EVALUATE AND IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO FOLLOW UP WITH CARE WARRANTED.
2. TO BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING, REFTEL PROVIDED NO INDICATION OF TIMING EITHER AS TO WHEN DANDRIDGE REPORT WOULD BE COMPLETED OR AS TO WHEN DECISION MIGHT BE TAKEN WITH REGARD TO POSSIBLE UTILITY OF FURTHER SY INVESTIGATION IN NASSAU.
3. QUESTION OF TIMING SEEMS TO ME TO BE HIGHLY RELEVANT:
(A) HAITIAN CONSUL GENERAL PAUL HAS ALLEGED TO ME THAT ADDITIONAL EMBASSY LOCAL, VERA ELCOCK, HAD MAJOR INVOLVEMENT IN VISA FRAUD COMPARABLY GREATER THAN THOSE EMPLOYEES ALREADY DISCHARGED BY US.
(B) PAUL HAS ALSO PROVIDED ADDITIONAL NAMES WHOM HE ALLEGES COULD PROVIDE FURTHER INFORMATION (SEE NASSAU 1082).
(C) EVEN MORE RECENTLY, PAUL CALLED HEAD OF MY CONSULAR SECTION TO PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL DATA:
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AA PAUL CLAIMED THAT A HAITIAN FROM FREEPORT RECENTLY COM-

PLAINED TO PAUL THAT HE HAD PAID DOLS 700.00 TO A BAHAMIAN BY NAME OF MCKENZIE TO SECURE VISAS FOR THREE HAITIANS TO ENTER U.S. Verna Elcock's name was given to Haitian as the contact point in U.S. Embassy although it is our understanding that the Haitian was to deal through McKenzie. Haitian's complaint was that McKenzie took his DOLS 700 but did not produce visas. Haitian received money back when he threatened to go to CID.

-- Paul also stated that in probing into visa fraud issue as requested by Ambassador, he discussed matter with a Haitian who runs a photography shop by name of Antoine Ferrier. Ferrier's step-son, one Ross Scott, was present at conversation. Scott, who apparently works as a photographer for his step-father has until recently frequented consular section almost daily ostensibly to take NIV photos for those needing them. Scott (a Bahamian) alleged to Paul that Verna Elcock was clearly involved in visa malfeasance.

(D) Then this afternoon we learned that two of the Bahamian locals whom we promoted as part of consular section shake-up were approached with bribe offers. One John Nesbitt is now working in consular section originally appeared to claim that approach was recent, i.e. within past few days. On later questioning by me he maintains approach was six weeks to two months ago and was firmly rejected. We are trying to clarify apparent discrepancy on timing. In any event, he claims to have firmly rejected approach which was made by Haitian businessman whom he can identify. He also admits to having been approached by still another Haitian in the business community two or three years ago whom he similarly rejected. Nesbitt can also identify this Haitian.

-- Second Embassy local, Thomas Pratt, who was moved into a new job as part of Embassy shakeup, also admits to having been approached some time ago, perhaps a year or two, by a Haitian with offer of payment. Some indication this may be one of the two Haitian businessmen who approached Nesbitt. Pratt also says he rejected approach out of hand and claims not to have been reapproached since. Pratt says he does not know man's name but could identify him.

(E) Finally, in course of these various investigations, I learned that Elcock was apparently accused of visa malfeasance. CONFIDENTIAL

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ANCE SEVERAL YEARS AGO BUT NOTHING CAME OF THE CHARGE. (EMBASSY HAS NOTHING IN THE FILES ON THIS. WE LEARNED OF IT FROM OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY HERE.)

4. I HAVE NO IDEA WHETHER LEADS PROVIDED BY ABOVE, IF FOLLOWED UP, WOULD BEAR FRUIT. IT SEEMS AT LEAST POSSIBLE THAT A MORE CAREFUL AND DETAILED CROSS EXAMINATION OF PAUL HIMSELF COULD REVEAL FURTHER USEFUL INFORMATION SINCE EACH TIME WE

HAVE CONTACT WITH HIM OR HE US HE SEEMS TO DEAL OUT ADDITIONAL CRUMBS. I HAD SUGGESTED TO DANDRIDGE WHEN HE WAS HERE THAT HE MIGHT WISH TO SEEK APPOINTMENT WITH PAUL. DANDRIDGE THOUGHT THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE USEFUL AT THAT TIME. PERHAPS NOW IS AN APPROPRIATE TIME.

5. FURTHER, AND IN THE MEANTIME, WE CONTINUE TO HAVE IN OUR EMPLOY A LOCAL AGAINST WHOM SERIOUS ALLEGATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE BUT WITH HARD EVIDENCE CURRENTLY INSUFFICIENT TO PROVE A CASE. WE ARE THUS IN THE DILEMMA OF NOT WISHING TO FIRE A PERSON WHO MIGHT BE INNOCENT WHILE AT THE SAME TIME HAVING IT ALLEGED THAT THERE IS A WIDESPREAD KNOWLEDGE IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY THAT SHE HAS BEEN ENGAGED IN FRAUDULENT ACTIVITIES. THIS STATE OF UNCERTAINTY IS NOT GOOD FOR THE EMBASSY IN GENERAL OR CONSULAR SECTION MORALE IN PARTICULAR.

6. RE REFTEL'S INTEREST IN WHETHER GCOB WILL PROSECUTE OFFENDERS, IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, THIS RESTS WITH US. IF WE BRING CHARGES, THE GOVERNMENT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY PROSECUTE. HOWEVER, WITH REGARD TO TWO LOCALS ALREADY DISCHARGED, IN SEEKING THEIR COOPERATION TO GET AT BIGGER FISH, WE STRONGLY IMPLIED THAT EMBASSY WOULD NOT PURSUE CRIMINAL CHARGES (THOUGH WE LEFT OPEN POSSIBILITY THAT GCOB MIGHT WISH TO DO SO ON ITS OWN). AS INDICATED, IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT GCOB UNLIKELY TO ACT UNLESS USG PREFERS CHARGES. CIRCUMSTANCES, WITH REGARD TO VERA ELCOCK SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT. SHE HAS BEEN TOLD THAT IN VIEW OF LACK OF ANY INDICATION OF COOPERATION FROM HER, SHOULD EVIDENCE BE ACCUMULATED INDICATING COMPLICITY IN VISA MALFEASANCE, EMBASSY WOULD PREFER CHARGES AND PRESS TO FULLEST EXTENT OF THE LAW.

7. ACCORDINGLY, FROM THE FOREGOING, I BELIEVE JUDGMENT OF WHETHER FURTHER SY INVESTIGATORY EFFORT IS WARRANTED BASED
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ON INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY PAUL, FOLLOWING UP LEADS WHICH HE HAS INDICATED, OTHER INFORMATION FROM EMBASSY LOCALS, ETC. MUST IN LAST ANALYSIS BE LEFT WITH SY TO DECIDE. MY OWN STRONG PREFERENCE AND RECOMMENDATION IS THAT WE SHOULD PURSUE THIS MATTER FURTHER RESOLVING AS DEFINITELY AS POSSIBLE WHETHER WE STILL HAVE ON THE STAFF A PERSON OR PERSONS WHO MAY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN VISA MALFEASANCE. POSSIBILITY OF BREAKING UP A WIDER RING OUTSIDE EMBASSY ALSO EXISTS.

8. WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR REACTIONS SOONEST.
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